



News Release

For Immediate Release
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New Stroke Awareness Campaign Tells the Stories of Real Stroke Survivors

Campaign highlights signs of stroke and importance of calling 9-1-1 to receive treatment immediately

(SALT LAKE CITY) — In 2004, nearly 3,500 Utahns were hospitalized for stroke and only half were ever able to return home under self-care. For many, the outcome could have been much better had they recognized the signs and received treatment in time. Strokes can be prevented. And in many cases, rapid treatment – within a three-hour window of the onset of symptoms – can prevent death or disability.

That's the message the Utah Department of Health's (UDOH) Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program wants to communicate with a new advertising campaign featuring several people who have suffered and survived strokes, but with varying outcomes. "The new campaign features survivors with a variety of outcomes, but who are all overcoming the results of their strokes and moving forward with their lives. And more importantly, they want to educate others," said Jessie Shupe, campaign coordinator, UDOH.

The new TV commercials feature Dr. Steven Edgley, Kara Hazen, Lori Clayson and Rob Mateus — four Utahns who tell their own stories of overcoming stroke. Dr. Steven Edgley is the medical director of the Stroke Rehabilitation Program at University Hospital. Dr. Edgley was only 28 years old and in his first year of residency when he suffered his stroke. He did receive treatment within about 45 minutes of onset but still suffers some speech impediments. However, he leads an active life as a physician helping those who have had strokes recover — having changed his medical career to focus on stroke after recovering from his own. He also water skis, climbs, and keeps up with his wife and two young daughters. "Life goes on—I live a full life. But strokes can happen to anyone...young and old," said Dr. Edgley. "It's so important to know the signs to look for, to call 911 and get help...don't wait. Even though I am not fully recovered, if I had not

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received immediate treatment I would be unable to do many of the things I can do.”

Kara Hazen, a successful real estate agent, and her husband were in Las Vegas on their way out of town. Kara was getting ready for the day when her arm suddenly went limp and she was unable to speak. Her husband recognized these two signs as a potential stroke (he was a former paramedic) and called for help. Within an hour after symptom onset, Kara was at the hospital receiving treatment and has since, for the most part, made a full recovery.

On May 18, 2005, Lori Clayson suffered a stroke. Lori was working at a convenient store and just thought she was tired. But, as she was handling a few transactions, she could not ring up the merchandise. She could think of what she wanted to do but no actions followed. After this went on for a little while, she finally called her husband to come and get her. After Lori scrambled to get her shift covered they made a stop to see if someone they knew could help. Finally, they went to the hospital where she received treatment just 12 minutes before the window of opportunity for treatment closed. Lori has made a great recovery. She still has some memory loss and weakness in her arm, but can ride her horse, play with her grandkids and garden. “Don’t second guess yourself and don’t let time get down to the wire,” she advises.

Rob Mateus suffered a stroke but waited to get to the hospital more than six hours after symptom onset. He went to bed with a headache thinking he could just “sleep it off.” Rob has some problems walking and impaired use of one arm. However, he stays pretty active coaching soccer and advocating for stroke victims. When asked what it would have meant to him to have known the symptoms of stroke and the importance of getting to the hospital within three hours, he replied, “It would have meant the world.”

The new TV commercials will debut on Monday, August 28 on KSL-TV, KTVX-TV and KUTV-TV and run throughout the fall. “We are confident these spots will be very effective in teaching people to learn the signs and symptoms of stroke for themselves and for the benefit of others, and encourage them to call 9-1-1 at the first sign,” said Shupe.

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Every year strokes afflict approximately 750,000 Americans, killing approximately 160,000 and leaving a high percentage of survivors with permanent disabilities. In fact, strokes are the number one cause of disability, and the number three cause of death in the nation.

Signs of Stroke:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg.
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding.
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes.
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination.
- Sudden, severe headache with no known cause.

For more information, and to view the ads online, visit www.hearthishighway.org or call 1-866-88-STROKE.

Editors Note:

Broadcast and Print media: Spot dubs are available from Aaron Evans of Love Communication at 519-8880.

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death; assuring access to affordable, quality health care; and promoting healthy lifestyles.